



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Travel Cayman Team Responds to Quarantine Breach**

**George Town, Cayman Islands (25 November, 2020)** Two travellers who were found to be in breach of Quarantine at Residence (QAR) protocols have been prosecuted following a court appearance via Zoom on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020. The couple in question have left the Cayman Islands following payment of a fine of \$1,000 KYD each. Persons arriving in the Cayman Islands are permitted to leave within the 14-day isolation period if a COVID-19 test taken at least 1 day before departure is negative. Additionally, the traveller must agree to being escorted by a Cayman Islands Airports Authority (CIAA) representative to ensure social distancing procedures are observed until their departure.

Following confirmation of the breach, the couple were removed from their residence and taken to a supervised quarantine facility. The couple were permitted to return to their residence for 24 hours in order to pack their belongings to prepare for their departure. A security officer was mandated by government and provided at the couple's expense to accompany them to their residence and remain with them throughout this period. The couple were taken to the airport via government approved transport and remained supervised until their departure. The Travel Cayman team have confirmed that the couple will not receive approval to travel if they reapply to return to the Cayman Islands while COVID-19 mitigation measures are in place.

Public Health confirmed that it has conducted the required investigations. As a matter of course in all such instances, contact tracing takes place and all of the necessary individuals are contacted. During this process public health officials determine if any further steps are required. In this current case, there is no longer a public health concern.

Public health officials also stressed the importance of travellers strictly adhering to quarantine protocols, noting that travellers who test negative on arrival could subsequently test positive on their day 15 PCR test, which is why the 14-day mandatory isolation period is in effect.

Following the quarantine breach, the Travel Cayman team convened a meeting to review and strengthen the current processes, and close any gaps in the system that could potentially be exploited. Travellers will now have to pass through an additional checkpoint at the airport to confirm that the bracelet has been fitted correctly, to mitigate against tampering.

Dr. Tasha Ebanks-Garcia, Director Travel Cayman stated that “since 1st October, 2,510 persons have arrived on Island, and of these, just over 1,000 individuals received approval to quarantine at a residence. While a single breach of quarantine protocols is regarded as one too many, there are an additional three cases associated to breaches of quarantine at residence protocols which are under investigation,” she said.

Dr. Garcia underscored that during the quarantine period, mobile compliance teams conduct random spot checks on persons quarantining at a residence and the call centre also makes contact to check how they are doing. Guidance and information is also provided to assist with unavoidable medical appointments and other important concerns

Referencing the breaches RCIPS Commissioner Derek Byrne said that “Overall, the public response to COVID-19 quarantine restrictions has been widely supported and very few breaches of quarantine restrictions have been detected. However, in light of recent events it is necessary to reinforce the message that persons subject to quarantine restrictions and that are found to be in breach of those restrictions will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Any person(s) prosecuted will be liable on conviction to a fine of ten thousand dollars and imprisonment for two years. In addition, the person(s) in isolation should not receive visits from any person(s) during their quarantine period.”

Speaking about the programme overall, Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz Manderson emphasised that every person who opts to participate in the QAR programme is required to sign an agreement which outlines the terms and conditions which must be adhered to during quarantine. This is done to ensure that travellers fully understand and agree to comply with the restrictions.

“Compared to other Countries the Cayman Islands is doing exceedingly well at keeping the coronavirus at bay and keeping our Islands safe remains a top priority. Breaches of the COVID-19 regulations will therefore not be tolerated and we will seek to prosecute all confirmed violations. I urge every traveller, as well as their friends and loved ones, to remember that compliance with the quarantine restrictions is helping to protect lives, and we are relying on you to play your part by remaining in isolation for the stipulated period to keep the Cayman Islands safe.”

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**Caring professionals are here for you. Mental Health Hotline call 1-800-534-6463 (MIND) Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.**

**Travel Cayman contact details: Email [TravelCayman@gov.ky](mailto:TravelCayman@gov.ky). Call +1 345 743 8463. Phone lines are open 8.30am to 5pm, Monday through Friday.**

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